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Federal Trade Commission Washington, D.C. 20580

FOR RELEASE Thursday, January 18, 1979

FTC PROPOSES TESTS OF CARBON MONOXIDE LEVELS IN CIGARETTES

Plans to test and publish the carbon monoxide content of cigarettes were announced today by the Federal Trade Commission.

The FTC, which has been testing the "tar" and nicotine content of cigarettes since 1967, said it is now able to determine the carbon monoxide level at the same time. The first results are scheduled to be published in June 1979.

FTC staff attorney Jane Dolkart said scientific evidence shows inhalation of carbon monoxide "increases the likelihood of developing heart disease and increases the likelihood that a heart attack will be fatal."

She said the 1979 Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health shows "a strong association between CO intake by smokers, coronary heart disease and an adverse effect on the cardiovascular system."

Carbon monoxide inhalation reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen to the heart. In the case of smokers, this occurs at the same time nicotine is increasing the heart's oxygen needs the report explains.

Pointing out that cigarettes low in "tar" and nicotine are not necessarily low in carbon monoxide, Dolkart said it is "essential that reliable information on the CO content of cigarette smoke be made separately available" and that such information "may be particularly crucial for those with pre-existing heart conditions."

She said the carbon-monoxide testing "will not slow down the existing 'tar' and nicotine testing program. alter the approved methodology or require an increase in the present personnel level."

(MORE)

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The carbon-monoxide testing is made possible by a new machine developed by the FTC's Tobacco Research Laboratory with a \$50,210 grant from the National Cancer Institute and the National Heart and Lung Institute.

The machine channels the carbon monoxide through infra-red detectors that read the level directly. The testing procedure is known as the "IRC (Infra red) Method."

✓ The FTC announced a 30-day period in which the public may comment on the agency's plans.

Specifically, comment was invited on whether to use the new machine in carbon monoxide analysis, whether the carbon monoxide content should be reported as milligram per cigarette and whether certain technical refinements should be made in the method of testing "tar" and nicotine.

Five copies of comments should be sent to Office of the Secretary, FTC 6th St. and Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20580. They must be postmarked no later than Feb. 20.

To aid public comment, a written description of the machine and a written description of the proposed changes in the 'tar' and nicotine testing methods are available from Harold G. Pillsbury, director, Tobacco Research Laboratory, FTC, 6th and Pennsylvania Ave NW. Washington, D.C. 20580. They may be obtained by writing or by calling him collect at (202)523-3559.

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